

# ***Tips for Descriptive Writing Exercise***

---

Descriptive writing exercises are used to evaluate your observation and writing skills. You will watch a video and be asked to write a narrative account of your observations. Below are some tips to help you prepare for that task:

## **NOTE-TAKING:**

- ☒ Take good notes during the video. Pay careful attention to details (e.g. names, addresses). If they spell a name on the video, be sure to listen carefully and write the name in your notes.
- ☒ You can use abbreviations when taking notes, but make sure you will remember what they mean.
- ☒ If it's relevant, write it down. Leave room so you can add more information if something comes up later. (Example: if only the last name is given at first, write it down, and then fill in the rest of the name later when it is given).
- ☒ Try to get direct quotes, especially with admissions of guilt or knowledge. If it is a long quote, just write the key words to refresh your memory - but get the important statements as accurate as possible. (Example: "I knew when I left the store I hadn't paid for it.")

## **NARRATION:**

- ☒ Use paragraphs to separate different ideas or topics.
- ☒ Use primarily simple, short sentences. Make sure sentences are complete (i.e., subject, verb, etc.)
- ☒ Avoid using jargon, slang or abbreviations. If you are not sure of the spelling or meaning of a word, choose a different word.
- ☒ Write concisely and to the point.
- ☒ If you say a sentence in your head when you write, you can generally get your punctuation correct. Punctuation adds the pauses or voice levels in conversation.
- ☒ Print neatly. Remember, evaluators will be reading and scoring your written document and they must be able to read it.

- ☒ Your knowledge of procedures or practices and reporting formats is not important to the exercise.
- ☒ Describe the incident well enough so that a reader will have a full understanding of what happened. Write it in chronological order.
- ☒ Decide what is important in the description and include only those things, along with supporting facts. Be careful not to ramble or be redundant. Keep it relevant.
- ☒ If your report is too short, you probably did not cover the essentials. If it's too long, you didn't keep it relevant.
- ☒ Use the 5 W's (and the 1 H)  
Who: Main players - suspect, victim, witness(es)  
What: What happened? - Keep it limited to those things relevant  
Where: Name of location where it happened, and an address  
When: Date and time  
Why: Motive (examples: "I had no money." "I hate them.")  
How: Usually a part of "What." How did they carry out the crime?
- ☒ Proofread your work carefully. It helps to read it mentally out loud to yourself.